

JUST TRYING TO GET A LITTLE SERVICE ....

I am drinking beer.

I have a table to the side  
and am waiting on my  
order.

it is one of these chain  
restaurants that are  
all about the  
city.

the food is usually bad  
but there is much space  
and I usually attempt to  
situate myself  
as far from the people as  
possible.

it's not always  
possible.

at the nearest table  
sit  
two fellows.  
one is rather ugly and  
plain  
and the other a young  
bland blonde boy  
in a blue t-shirt and white  
walking  
shorts.

the waitress is  
bending over the table  
between them.  
she is bending over  
the back of a  
chair  
she is  
chatting and  
giggling ...

the poor dear is  
evidently  
interested in  
blue t-  
shirt  
but she speaks to  
both of  
them.

then  
she  
rushes off.

"what a whore," says  
blue t-  
shirt.

"terrible ass,"  
says the ugly  
fellow.

"I wish to hell,"  
says blue t-  
shirt, "we could just  
get waited on  
without all the  
bullshit."

there is nothing much  
for a while  
then  
she's back  
bending over the  
chair  
talking and  
giggling.

"waitress," I  
say.

she doesn't  
respond.

"HEY! WAITRESS!" I  
intone.

she gets off the  
chair-back and  
faces  
me.

"yes, sir?"

"could I have another beer,  
please?"

"oh, of  
course ...."



she trots off toward the libation.

blonde t-shirt looks at me:

"you don't use the term 'HEY!' when you address people."

"no, when it's necessary, I do ...."

"what's with this old fuck?" asks his ugly friend.

"he thinks he's a wise fuck, that's all ...."

"remember what we did to the last wise fuck we ran into?"

"oh yeah: we put the cure ...."

the waitress is back with my beer. then sensing that something is in the air she vanishes.

I take a hit from the bottle.

"hey, old man" says blue t-shirt, "I got something else you can suck on!"

I look at him.

"yeah? what is it?"

"you wanna step outside and find out?"

"any time ...."

"that old man thinks he's tough," says the ugly one.

"you tough, old man?"

"maybe not but I'll tell you what: I'll step outside with both of you ...."

"hey, listen to that shit!" says blue t-shirt.

"he must be near 70 years old," says his buddy.

"please don't worry about my age ...."

"fuck you, old man!" says blue t-shirt.

I point casually toward the doorway.

they get into a conversation about other matters.

they won't bother me any more.

for it all I am usually better off eating at home —



I take another  
hit of my  
beer:  
something's always  
after a  
man.

EMILY BUKOWSKI

my grandmother  
always made the sunrise  
Easter service  
and the Rose Bowl  
parade.

she also liked to go to the  
beach, sit on those benches  
facing the sea.

she thought movies were  
sinful.

she ate enormous platefuls  
of food.

she prayed for me  
constantly.

"poor boy: the devil is  
inside  
of you."

she said the devil was  
inside her husband  
too.

though not divorced  
they lived  
separately  
and had not seen each  
other  
for 15 years.

she said that hospitals  
were  
nonsense

she never used them  
or  
the doctors.

at 87  
she died one evening  
while feeding her  
canary.

she liked to  
drop the seed  
into the cage  
while making these  
little  
bird sounds.

she wasn't very  
interesting  
but few people  
are.

#### A RE-EVALUATION

he told me he had been  
married  
5 times and that next  
Wednesday  
he would be  
38 years  
old.

I had always thought him  
to be  
one of the sharpest of the  
valets at  
racetrack  
parking

but then  
I've always been better at  
picking horses  
than at  
picking  
people.